



The Circle

Volume 15 No. 2
Spring 1990

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Editor's Note

Here it is, the Winter issue of The Circle. Once again we've endeavored to bring you the best selection of poetry and prose from our files. We found a few articles of interest for the student community, while still managing to steer clear of homosexual topics. Again, we hope there is something for everyone, but if not, please come by and contribute. As a student you have a right to join the staff and have a vote in the selecting process. After all, The Circle is funded by student activity fees (which is YOUR money).

Come by and see what we're all about. All it takes is one night a week. Stop by.



Rebecca Haack

"We the willing, led by the unknowing, are doing the impossible. We have done so much with so little for so long, we can now do anything with nothing."

Cover by Ken Chen

The Circle, financed by student activity fees, serves as a forum for the writers and artists within the university community. It aims to appeal to a diverse Auburn audience by providing a variety of articles, essays, short stories, art and photography. The views expressed throughout the issue are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the publisher (the Board of Student communications) or those of the *The Circle* or editorial board.

The Circle
Volume 15, Number 2

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SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1) All submissions should be typed, double-spaced, with the usual left and right margins.

2) Submissions are accepted at the Circle office in the Glom suite. If no one is present in the office place your offering in the box on the door.

3) If you want your submission returned to you, please provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your submission. This makes life easier for everyone involved.

4) Submissions should also have a cover sheet stating the title, the author's name, the author's phone number (for editing purposes), a pseudonym for printing (if desired), and a brief statement for the Contributors List.

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Soldier of Fortune

by David Wimberley

During midterm week and final exam week, men in all sectors of the university would launch massive offensives against lecture notes, textbooks, and lab reports. We waged total war, fighting grimly to claim every inch of ground possible. Few lost their academic lives in the bitter end of test hour, but only after long, valiant battles.

Not so, the mercenary.

"I'm between an 85 and a 90 now," Author would announce amid the carnage of a midterm study session. "It's enough to maintain my average." Which was an A; we all understood that. And he would slap his book closed, fetch his radio and cheap rubber basketball from our dormroom, and trot outside to shoot baskets on the court beside the quad.

After Author trampled the chemistry midterm for 85 points, leaving three equations unattempted though he had time to spare, I demanded to know why.

"Any more points are useless to me," he said patiently, as a father explaining wisdom to a child. "My final transcript can't reflect a higher grade than A, which I already have—and will keep. Not only our days are numbered, but our hours, even our minutes! Weren't my minutes wiser spent in kicking through fallen maple leaves than in raking up vain, excessive points on a chemistry exam?"

"But Author, they were in your power!"

"Friend Mark, that is the more reason for turning to pleasant aims."

His other midterm test scores preached the same philosophy: English, 88—four short answer questions left alone; calculus, 85—three equations not attempted; world history, 90—the last short-essay question left unanswered.

Our history professor assumed Author had inadvertently passed over the last question. The day after the test, he quietly invited Author to his office and offered him a chance to make it up. "You would have answered it brilliantly yesterday," Dr. Kertz said. "You turned in your test

with ten minutes to spare, my fastest and most thorough pupil by far. Now don't hesitate, son—it's not dishonorable."

But Author did hesitate.

So Dr. Kertz said, "I'll lock the door, if you prefer." And he lodged his drooping pipe in the corner of his mouth and stepped gently, cautiously, mechanically—as very old men step—from around his desk to depress the button in the center of the doorknob. He returned to his chair, not smiling and neither frowning, but merely waiting dignantly for Author to finish the test, which lay on the desk between them.

Finally Author said, "Thank you, sir. But I don't need them."

"Pardon?"

"I don't need the points. With the ninety my average is already A."

Dr. Kertz served principles of his own. For Author to recite his philosophy of numbered minutes would have been as futile as reasoning evolution to Dr. Kertz in Swahili, and twice as rude. Fortunately Dr. Kertz pre-empted any such perversity by ordering Author out the door, which was unlocked and swung open as swiftly as the old gentleman could manage.

On tests of all kinds, from equation to multiple choice essay,, Author calculated his scores in his photogenic head before turning in the tests.

Author continued to skate the line between A and B, answering only nine of the ten questions on each weekly reading quiz; and Dr. Kertz continued to allow him the prerogative, never threatening Author nor protesting to him. Then no quizzes remained for the quarter, only one last regular test a week before the final exam. As usual, Author finished and turned in the test minutes ahead of the rest of us.

That was a hard test for me. I was guessing I had scored in the C or D range. I asked Author how he did. He said, "I made a 95 or 96, depending on Kertz's interpretation of a dependent clause in the fourth-to-

last sentence of my second essay."

He wasn't kidding. On tests of all kinds, from equation to multiple choice essay, Author calculated his scores in his photogenic head before turning in the tests.

I asked him why he scored so high, and he said, "For a cushion toward exemption. I have mis-calculated scores, you know. As well as written wrong answers I thought were correct."

On the following Monday, Dr. Kertz returned our tests, folded crisply lengthwise as he had received them from us. Our names were scrawled or else written neatly on them, in haste or in leisure as time had individually dictated to us in the closing minutes of the test period. Throned behind his oaken desk on the podium, he glared through his hard spotless monacle at each test as he thumbed it from the stack and called the student's name it bore: Mr. Adams...Mr. Adair...Mr. Baker..."

A student would stand bravely, mount the podium to accept his test, and walk solemnly back to his desk. There he would page through it, noting with increasing horror or chagrin or satisfaction—never indif-

ference—the many or few red subtractions penned razor thin in the margins. On the last page he would finally reach the test score, mathematically laid out under subtractions from 100, perhaps followed by a scribbled terse message of praise or disappointment from Dr. Kertz.

"...Mr. Hansen..." Author opened his test to the back page while skipping down from the podium. What he saw forcibly jolted him. He spun around to face Dr. Kertz, who deigned not even to notice, continuing to call us forth: "...Mr. Hadler...Mr. Mark Allen Jones...Mr. Mark Davis Jones..."

Author and I passed in the aisle. "What is it?" I whispered.

He smiled and winked to me, having recovered. "Nothing," he said. "A challenge now."

I scored a 76. As on any essay test, I found a few debatable red subtractions from the score—five or six points were marked off for errors that should have cost only two or three points, in my opinion. But Author obviously had been cheated, or else justly punished: honestly, I could argue for either definition of Dr. Kertz's slashing of Author's test grade for a minor and merely careless mix-up of Henry of Guise for Henry of Navarre. The immediate cost to Author? Fifteen points off his test grade, which fell to 80 from his

showers, he was still dragging around, shoulders bowed and head down, eyes steadily reading the split columns of text.

"Author!" I said. "You've been reading all night?"

Author looked up, not moving his head at all; merely an upward flick of the eyes, and then his gaze fell again to the book. The eyes paused in their horizontal scanning. "Yes," he replied.

"Pace yourself, guy," I advised. "You'll burn out before Friday."

"No," he said weakly, lowering the book and raising his head. "I won't burn out. I don't need sleep. You don't need sleep. None of us need it for any biological reason scientists have ever found."

Author opened his test to the back page while skipping down from the podium. What he saw forcibly jolted him.

otherwise correctly forecasted 95. So ended his weeks-long leisurely garnering of an A and an exemption from the exam.

The ultimate cost to him? I can't say. What mortal can name the exact and only cause of another's downfall? I can only tell you what happened, only relate the tragic events that seemed to follow Author's low test score as links in a chain follow the plunging anchor into the depths.

Author scored straight 91's in all his other classes, so he had only the history exam for which to study. He began at the title page of the textbook, and turned pages relentlessly, reading primarily the main text, also examining maps and photographs and paintings and drawings, and noting captions and sidebarred blocks of text. As he studied he roamed our dorm room: he sprawled on his bunk, or hunched over the desk, or sat crosslegged on the floor, or leaned against the window sill with one leg crooked over the radiator. After I turned off the lights at eleven o'clock, he paced up and down the dormitory hallway, still reading. Near midnight when I passed him in the hall after taking a whizz, he had reached page 392. And in the morning, when I walked slapping down the hall in my flips to the

When I returned to the room after lunch, I found him sacked out, his history textbook cradled in his arm like a lover, so I opened a book to study, but not twenty minutes later his alarm clock sounded, and he sat up stretching and yawning.

"Morning," I said. "Thought you didn't need sleep."

"As I thought," he said through a yawn. "I scorned the sandman, yet he mastered me today. Lifelong psychological habits are difficult to break with a day's effort, I suppose."

"Author, surely you don't need all this effort to get an A. Of all people, surely you don't."

He rolled from his bed and began executing deliberate jumping jacks. "You're wrong," He said. "Kertz may be writing the final for the entire class, but he is composing one question—an identification perhaps, or perhaps a true/false—especially for me. He's studying possibilities now, this very moment even; I can feel it. He's pouring over his lectures and leatherbound textbook, gilded like a Bible, planning the most obscure and difficult question ever included in any history exam the world over, at any level, in any language."

"You're paranoid."

"No, I'm not. He carefully worked it out so that I must score every point of 100 on the exam for an A in the

course. To eat his test alive, bones and skin and claws and hair, and whatever spiked collar he may arm it with, I must memorize this book"—he thumped it with the heel of his hand on a down stroke of jumping jacks. "And I will do it. I must also memorize my notes—and someone else's, too, to be prudent. Yours?"

"Sure," I said and laughed. "You have your work cut out for you."

He sighed and said, "My work is not cut out at all. Rather, it's whole and entire, all inclusive."

He resumed the book, which he finished before nightfall, when he borrowed my notes. Again I slept at eleven. Again he paced the hall into the morning.

At six o'clock my alarm woke us both—I in my bed well-rested, Author crumpled stiffly on the floor, startled and panicking. "What! What!" he blurted, struggling to his feet and toppling overbalanced into my dresser, knocking off miniature framed pictures of my mother and father, spilling my ashtray of pennies to the hardwood floor. The pennies rolled ringing in all directions.

I dragged him to his bed. He was babbling historical nonsense: "Henry the Nantes took the tower of London—I swear! I swear it's what it—it—it was going—"

I slapped him smartly. He fell back to the pillow, and having shed his hysteria, asked urgently, quietly: "What day is it?"

"Wednesday, Author. It's Wednesday, December sixth. You have two days before the exam. Got it?"

"Thank you," he said carefully. "Thanks. Okay. Hey, Mark—I apologize. I'll pick all that up. I just—I just—" "What? What happened?"

"I slept, yet found no rest," he said. "It's—?" he tapped his left wrist.

"Eleven minutes after six in the morning."

"Six o'clock—okay. Six a.m. For three hours I slept, and I dreamed I was taking Kertz' exam. The questions didn't make sense, Mark. I couldn't read them. They didn't even make grammatical sense. I—I couldn't read them." He threw his arm over his eyes against the light.

It was unbelievable, what this guy was doing to himself. But I exercised restraint—because what can a person do with a guy like that? "You're studying too much," I said.

"Slack off, I'm telling you."

He sat up briefly, eyes sunken and red. "Are you going for a shower now?"

"Not anymore, I'm not. I want to make it for breakfast."

"Are you coming right back?" he asked.

"For a few minutes. Then I have the calculus exam."

"Then I will sleep now, and rest this time. Wake me when you return from breakfast."

"Good," I said, slipping on my shoes and jacket. "You do that. You rest."

"Will you bring me some bananas?" he asked, not opening his eyes.

"Sure," I said.

"Thanks, Mark," he said, and rolled into his covers. "*Remember to wake me.*"

Author wolfed the five bananas I brought him, peeling them whole, and between bananas he explained how he had conquered his dream. "When Kertz passes out the tests and I find mine unintelligible, I know right away it's the recurring, crippling nightmare. With that knowledge I gain all power: I could aim a finger at Kertz and say, 'Blam, blam,' and he would go down with two bullets in the chest. Sometimes I used both hands and full automatic fire. Then I would fly away and rest on a cloud—and when I woke up here, I was a new man."

"On forty-five minutes of sleep?"

"Absolutely."

He continued studying straight through Wednesday night into Thursday morning, when he stopped long enough to eat a small breakfast at the cafeteria. He napped shortly again Thursday night.

Friday morning he showered for the first time in four days and ceremoniously shaved his stubbly chin with a new razor and lather from a virgin can of Foamy Regular. We ate bacon and poached eggs and toast together, quizzing each other on trivia from throughout the history course. And shortly before nine, Author and I arrived at the classroom and found single vacant seats, scattered and hidden in the almost-full classroom.

Seconds later two of Dr. Kertz' graduate assistants infiltrated the

ranks of student desks, each carrying an armload of final exams, handing one face-down to each student. I could see Author nervously drumming the eraser end of his pencil on his desk top.

While they passed out the exams, Dr. Kertz spoke from behind his desk on the podium: "You gentlemen know the rules by now, yet may I remind you that roaming eyes for whatever reason will spy a zero upon returning to their proper field of view; and a word or even a letter written after I call time will earn the same." He installed his monacle and flipped open his pocket watch. "Time is approaching, gentlemen. Begin...Now."

As I turned my copy of the test face up, I saw that the photocopied words of the test questions, sharp and black and clear at the left margin, washed progressively lighter to grey in the horizontal center of the page and then disappeared completely at the right margin. I glanced up at Dr. Kertz; he was concentrating on something he was writing, so I looked at the test of the guy next to me, and his was the same. Everyone was peeking around, checking, seeing that all the tests were faded out. One of the graduate assistants, mustering severity, stood as if ready to blow a whistle on all the activity.

But Author's voice rang out then, triumphant in relief, saying, "Ha! I knew it all the time!"

Cringing, I saw him standing straight and aiming an imaginary pistol at Dr. Kertz. He index finger barrel twitched upward twice as he said, "Blam, blam." He uttered the first report of his pistol with rising inflection, as if to answer the question with finality.

Dr. Kertz halfway stood, and seemed to stare in angry amazement. "Mr. Hanson," he said, enunciating threateningly, and still almost in pity.

"A wiry old geezer, hey?" shouted Author, leaping to the podium. He rushed the old man, firing an automatic assault rifle, barking its report: "Kack-ack-ack-ack-ack! Kack-ack! Kack-ack-ack-ack-ack-ack-ack! Kack! Kack!"

Dr. Kertz' monacle tumbled from his face to tinkle on the floor. He first sat heavily, then tipped over backwards in his chair as if real bullets were slamming into his chest. He fell without excessive motion, too—not kicking his legs out or waving his arms in circles to counterbalance—he simply tipped over like a stiff mannequin and disappeared behind his desk.

When Author began jumping up and down and flapping his arms like wings, I couldn't watch anymore; I *honestly felt sick to my stomach*. I laid my head down and pretended none of these outrages were happening, so that is all I personally witnessed. You can read about the rest of it in those disgraceful national tabloids or in the campus paper: how Author fled from the graduate assistants to the study courtyard on the roof, where he almost "flew away" before they talked him down off the railing. I don't want to talk about it anymore.

Dr. Kertz eventually got up, with some help, and read the questions to us from his master copy, holding it at arm's length and squinting hard. So the rest of us finished taking the exam, and of course it lacked any spiked collar.



--David Fuller and David Martorana

Destiny and Deities

by August Bigman

I sat restlessly in the church, my small legs atop the hymnal rack on the pew before me. As the preacher's words flared out across the congregation and smacked the hearts of elderly ladies near their death, I drew pictures, sketching demons, girls and other monsters on bulletins and notebook paper. Nearby, my family all sat together in a show of unity, nicely dressed and conscientious, and wished the pastor would look down at his watch so we could all get some food in our Sunday morning bellies. I only wanted to dart home and possibly catch the first few minutes of the weekly countdown show on the radio. God already seemed terribly distant.

But at least I believed in some sort of cosmic order as a teenager, even if it wasn't exactly like the pastor dictated it to us, full of fire and brimstone. I believed in God most of my life, as a matter of fact. The older folks in my family often convened in our living room back home to sing hymns and share that old time religion, driving us kids into our rooms to worship our own idols on the television. My elders left an impression upon me that would unsettlingly clash with the new contemplations lying ahead. You see, something happened along the way, yanking away any churchly foundation I might have had and leaving me in a wasteland of uncertainties.

After taking a philosophy class my first quarter in college, I lost my entire spiritual base. I misplaced a God somewhere in the confusion of speculation. Logic can bring about some wonderful things, make you aware of how people con you every day, but proving that the Lord doesn't exist to someone already confused isn't among the more commendable accomplishments of modern philosophers. My professor in basic logic, a tall, thin man with eyes caving deep within his skull, was a member of the board of the American Humanist Association in the southeast in his past. Preaching ardent agnosticism, he

spent a good deal of time that quarter in fiery classroom sermons, plotting to prove conclusively to us naive freshmen that an absolutely perfect being had never existed.

Oh, what'd he know?! The New York Times said "God is Dead" back in 1970, and they tend to know the scoop better than your average philosophy professor! What happened to the bliss of my previous ignorance?! I clung to the one thought that had kept it all in perspective before: 'If God never existed, then how did the universe get started out of nothingness?'

"Well," Professor would snarl, "Where did God come from then, genius?"

It all began to make sense despite my efforts to screen out these new doubts. It troubled me that I had only to turn on the news to see the anguish in the world that professor said a truly benevolent God would never ignore. Two channels over, I found no reassurance from a tacky-suited lunk with a goofy haircut and a southern drawl who said God was merely testing us. Then he asked for money.

Professor said that religion had provided history's most profitable enterprise, preying on the fragile and gullible, all too misled to even give it a second thought before opening their wallets (he had a field day discussing Oral Robert's claim that God was holding him ransom for two million). He said religion proved fundamentally selfish since contributors expected some sort of blessing in return for their donation to the plate each week.

"Meanwhile, the rest of the world crumbles, children starve, diseases spread like wildfire, wars escalate and people fight in the streets because they can't make opinions meet about God."

My whole freshman year, I struggled each day with contemplative speculations. Professor had stirred me to deep thought alright,

assuming that "false prophet" role that saints always fling at doubting persuaders to nullify their comments. Should I believe everything people have told me based solely on assumption without proof?

But what proof? Oh, any good, God-fearing Christian will refer you to the Bible for proof, but what do we know about that? The world's full of holy scrolls from every religion in existence. The world's full of messiahs, readying the path for their steadfast followers. Besides, the Bible seems full of abstract references and contradictions. We might as well just go with the coin that says 'In God We Trust' if we want to hear that sort of speculation. We might as well flip the coin and see which way it all turns up.

Feelings of guilt arose from my daily doubts, the anxiety of sacrilege that came with contemplation. Professor barked about how Christianity resembled mythology, renovated and refined from a civilization which labeled all it could not understand in a hostile environment—lightning, madness, and other phenomenon—as divine. He said it, like a chain letter, passed down from generation to generation, threatening all the while to scorch anyone who broke the succession in a horrible, fiery underworld called hell. A powerful incentive appealing to the imagination or a part of the universe we don't understand yet, is the message of hell a warning we should truly heed?

"If not for fear of punishment," Professor said, "sinning would be sweet."

During that time, I began to examine the same type of people that I once went to church with. My best friend finally gave in to his mother's fanatical raving (we called her "Godzilla"—get it?) and got himself "straight" so she'd shut up about her "duty" to reform him. Today, we can't even have a conversation about the weather without Jesus somehow creeping into the discussion.

Professor's claim that denominations catered to the weak, the poor, the desperate and simple-minded rang loud in the churches I returned to with my family once again. I saw people unhappy with their lives, growing more and more intoxicated by the legends and clinging to ancient, unseen miracles and unspoken promises. They lived each day in suppression, safe in the light of their ethical purity, but so limited in their ability to experience all that life could offer.

They turned their heads toward heaven, enraptured, speaking of the doomsday the signs indicated was next month. Swapping words with the Jews and the Moslems and Catholics and thinking only they will receive divine deliverance from a fallen world; telling me I may burn in hell if I don't accept their point of view. And if God does exist, what's to happen to those of us who want to believe, but can't anymore?

No concern, according to Professor. "We'll just die and turn to dust," he said.

He claimed religion had its uses in providing some hope, but nothing more. Six billion souls wandering through this life, all looking for some direction, some purpose to go on—some justification in the throes of death. Religion provided just that. It also tends to get a little out of hand every now and then, however. Moslems told they will reach Allah-heaven if they make suicide-raids upon Uncle Sam's embassies. Jim Jones and the Kool-Aid picnic in Guyana. The Spanish Inquisition. Swaggart, Jim and Tammy and the Moral Majority.

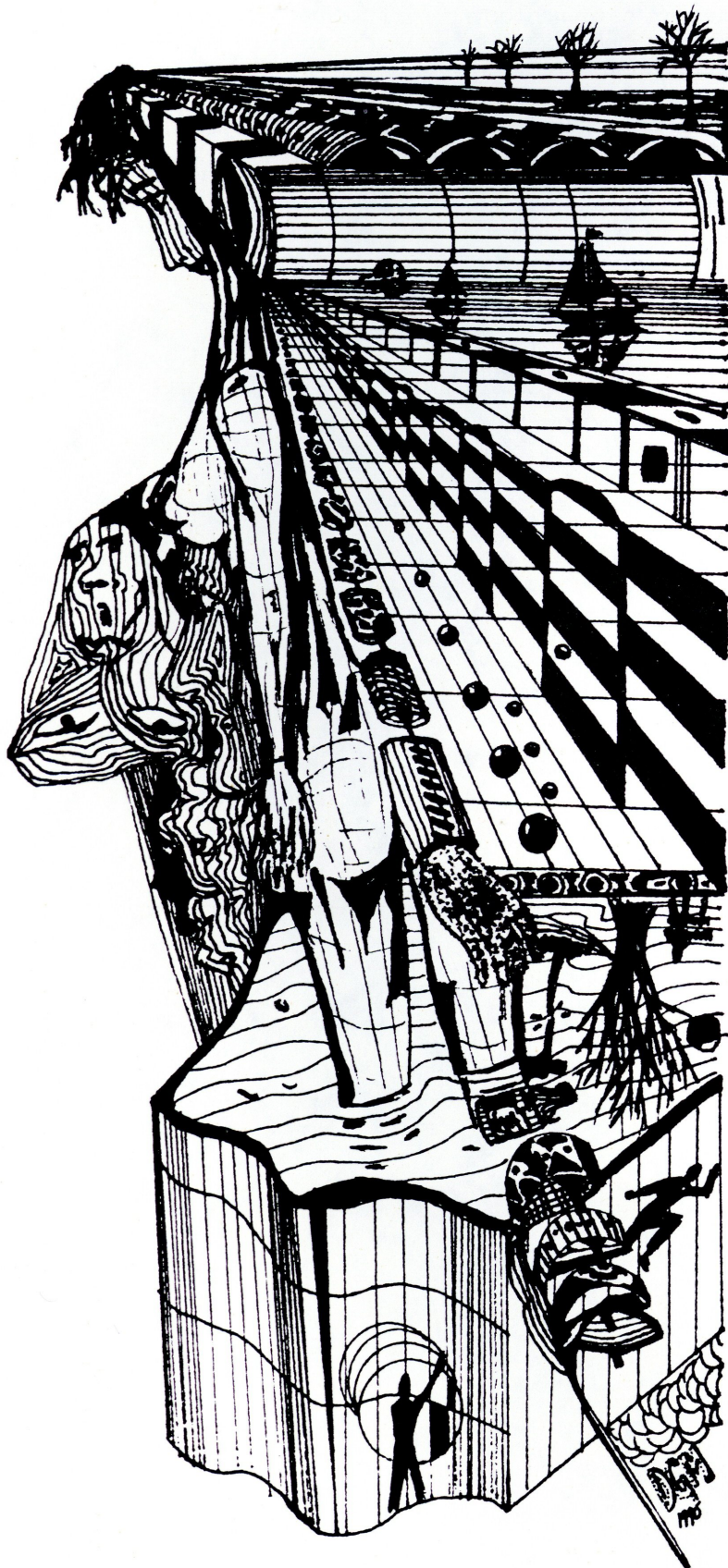
What is so cruelly inconceivable about wanting to touch God with the senses? If I couldn't find God in the material world, then maybe I could stumble onto the devil. Like Billy Joel sings, "The sinners are much more fun." But all I found was this intolerable silence calling out to me—just this universe growing smaller and smaller till nothing seemed worth believing in. I admired Milton and Dante; at least they had the imaginations to believe in the devil.

But if God exists, then my God is cool, unconcerned about the 'evils' of heavy metal music or the length of my hair. He (or she) probably laughs at the Church Lady too. My aunt back home acts like that, throwing judgments down from her ivory tower and deeming her opinions the truth of the universe. I can only believe what science has substantially confirmed: the incarnation of certain feelings, murderous or saintly, horrible or glorious, in the human mind. God does exist—in our nature.

Of course, one day I might discover that I have flirted with disaster, horrible disaster, and the prophets and the martyrs have been accurate all along. I don't know if I would want my doubts proven baseless given the consequences, but still I'm unsure as to whether I could live my life knowing it meant nothing more than, say, a paramecium's existence in a drop of water. If I am indeed wrong, I only pray that God will have the mercy that everyone raves about and will see the reasons I have gone sightless in the "light" of logic.

I certainly don't want to burn for all of eternity in that endless pit where you can constantly hear the anguished screams of a billion doomed souls, my flesh melting and my spirit wailing in unavailing despair.

Just keep that in mind, Jesus...



--David Fuller and David Martorana

The Star

"How black the night! How grey the clouds!"
T'were my thoughts as I noticed the sky.
Scanning the heavens, my eye found a Star
The clouds had failed to make shy.

One Star! The moment my eye found that Star,
That moment seemed more like an hour.
Millions of thoughts raced though my head
As the Star exerted its power.

One moment, one Star. And what did I think?
Of Shakespeare, Frost, Galileo,
Of Dickinson, Socrates, Shelley, and Keats,
Of Petrarch, da Vinci, and Plato.

Did this same Star, ever, of one,
Capture breath or give reason to wonder?
Did this self-same Star strengthen the life
In a body now lying under?

Did Jefferson look upon this Star
And ponder the fate of his land?
Did Beethoven see it and write music down
With a furious stroke of hand?

Was this same Star watching Revere
On his famous midnight ride?
Did this same Star see Josephine
Her first night as Napoleon's bride?

Millions of thoughts the same in scope
That moment for attention fought,
And a feeling of oneness with future and past
Was what that one instant brought.

But none lasts forever, and this neither did,
And to loss soon turned my gain.
For the Star was moving,
But it was not shooting;
It was, alas! a plane.

Elizabeth Bowden

The Reaching Apex,
 Lower, eternal for
 Rigid and wider — blue
 Grasp at the weathered but
 Fingers, the freezing wind
 Only their own twigs become
 Phloem and xylem fill Thicker,
 Order, the arms—thick and tough -
 Shapes and geometric figurations.
 Become, Near the bottom the outreaching
 and darker, less branches and
 Finally, the arms meet
 In a gnarled, mangled mass
 Flesh and knotted,
 Torso. Fixed and dominant
 Pushing the
 Arms upward
 Toward the
 Sun — which
 Heats the empty
 Fingers. Ice,
 Melting, refreshes
 The veins of the reaching arms. The wind and
 Frost rushing to freeze the melted ice. And so the fingers die again. Only winter.

A Tree in Winter

Simmons Buntin

Freedom, Lies, Drugs, and Death

by Christopher Shaffer

There is a bad idea that is growing more and more popular lately. The idea is the legalization of drugs. The very thought of legalizing drugs is so inane it would seem easy to dismiss without much consideration. Unfortunately, throughout history bad ideas have had a tendency to become reality. Reagan visited Bitburg, a cemetery filled with Nazi SS soldiers. Napoleon invaded Russia. Paramount released Star Trek V. All were bad ideas which could easily have been avoided.

Proponents of the legalization of drugs have reservoirs of propaganda deeper than even those of the Communist Party. Making drugs legal would supposedly cause murder to decrease, crime to decrease, and keep youths away from these substances. The rationale behind this is that with drugs legal and being regulated by the government addicts would no longer have to steal or murder to obtain them. This is because prices would decrease and people could easily pick an addiction that would fit into their budget. Also, with the government regulating drugs, like it does alcohol, children couldn't obtain these substances.

All of this sounds good, but as with most things in life that sound good it just isn't true. No matter how cheap drugs might become with federal regulating, there will always be people—addicts—who are too poor to buy them. It is at this point that they will steal or kill to get what they want. Additionally, since people are not in control of their bodies and minds while taking some substances they are still just as likely to kill someone regardless of whether the drugs they are taking are legal.

As for keeping drugs away from our youth, it is necessary to observe the government's success at keeping alcohol away from minors. The policy here is a dismal failure and is openly mocked by adults and children alike. Parents buy their children liquor for parties. Children get people they know who are older to buy liquor for them. Since enforcement of the law is so lax in this case it is an affront to any voter's intelligence to state that legalization will stop youth drug users.

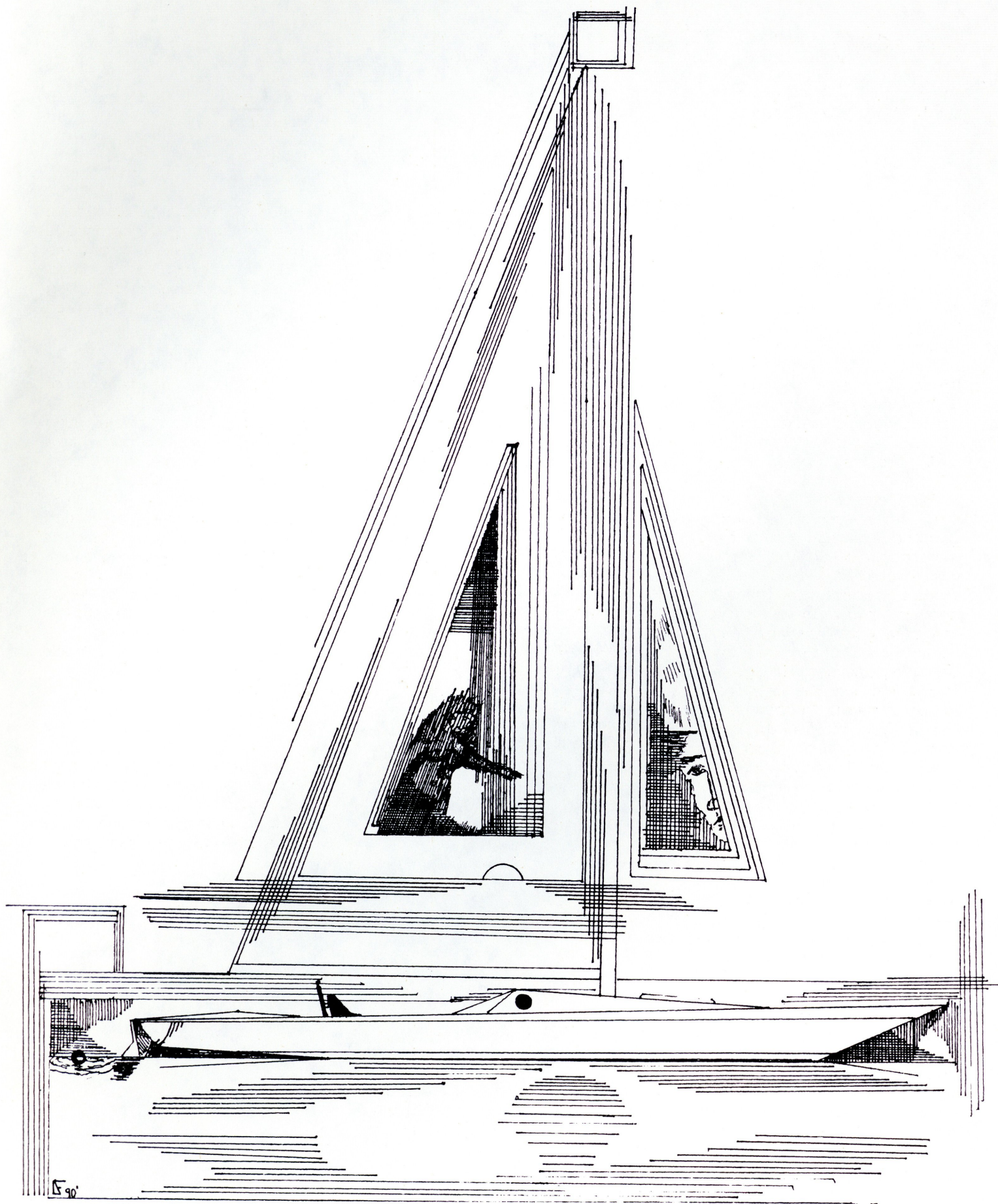
One of the most popular reasons for legalizing drugs is that it is impossible for the police and other officials to keep people from buying them. Maybe it is impossible to completely end drug smuggling, but what sort of precedent is being set if this idea were to become a reality? People are always going to drive too fast; why not do away with the speed limit? It's impossible to house and feed all of the homeless; why worry with them? People are occasionally going to get angry with each other, sometimes so angry they will kill someone; that can't be stopped, so let's legalize murder too.

Freedom is the reason many give in support of the legalization of drugs. This is a free society and the people can do whatever they want. That is true so long as one person's freedom doesn't infringe on that of another. For this reason there are laws against speeding, rape, and murder. It is useless to argue that drugs don't infringe on the rights, or pose a danger to others. When a person ingests something that causes hallucinations, paranoia, and disorientation, that person becomes a threat to anyone near him.

A problem no one seems to want to face is what should be done to help all the people who become addicted after drugs are legalized. Are the Supporters of this idea willing to pay for rehabilitation centers on a national scale?

Only the hypocritical and lethargic can support an idea such as drug legalization. It is improper to make something inherently wrong legal simply because present laws are hard to enforce. As a country we must work together to stop this scourge against our civilization. Good minds are being lost not only on a daily, but an hourly basis. How can a nation survive without a large body of fully functioning minds working together? With the legalization of drugs too many of these minds would be lost forever. It will be at that point that We The People will be no more.

Editor's note—This article reflects the opinions of the writers only. It does not necessarily reflect those of the staff. If you wish to respond, please do so in article form. Thank you.



-David Fuller and David Martorana

The Atrophication

Crumbling haystack towers
of solid poison beads
drip down her face,
lodge in varicose roots.
Feathered children oversee
the tragedies of tractor furrows
and derelict blackhead dumps,
unconscious beneficiaries
of Mother's leprosy.
Stroking fire licks
rusted oil drum side-
nearby man dies slowly,
warmed by the heat
of his pestilent fever.

Matthew Michaud

The Wayside Chapel

An English lady, while visiting Switzerland was looking for a room and she asked the schoolmaster if he could recommend any. He took her to see several rooms and when everything was settled, the lady returned to her home to make final preparations to move. When she arrived home, the thought suddenly occurred to her that she had not seen a W.C. (water closet toilet) around the place. So she immediately wrote a note to the schoolmaster and asked him if there was a W.C. around. The schoolmaster was a very poor student of English so he asked a parish priest if he could help him in the matter. Together they tried to discover the meaning of the letters W.C. and the only solution they could find was a Wayside Chapel (W.C.) The schoolmaster then wrote the following note to the English lady:

DEAR MADAM: I take great pleasure in telling you that the W.C. is situated nine miles from the house in the center of a beautiful grove of pine trees surrounded by lovely grounds.

It is capable of holding 229 people and is open on Sundays and Thursdays only. As there are a great number of people expected during the summer months, I'd suggest that you come early; although there is usually plenty of standing room. This is an unfortunate situation, particularly if you are in the habit of going regularly.

You will, no doubt, be glad to hear that a good number bring their own lunch and make a day of it; while others, who can afford it, go by car and arrive just in time. I would especially recommend to your ladyship to go on Thursdays when there is an organ accompaniment. The acoustics are excellent and even the most delicate sounds can be heard everywhere.

It may interest you to know that my daughter was married in the W.C. and it was here that she met her husband. I can remember the rush there for seats. There were ten people to a seat usually occupied by one. It was wonderful to see the expression on their faces.

The newest attraction is a bell donated by a wealthy resident of the district. It rings every time a person enters. A bazaar is to

be held to provide plush seats for all, since the people feel that is a long felt need. My wife is rather delicate so she cannot attend regularly. It is almost a year since she went last. Naturally, it pains her very much not to be able to go more often.

I shall be delighted to reserve the best seat for you, if you wish, where you will be seen by all. For the children, there is a special time and place so that they will not disturb the elders. Hoping to have been of some service to you.

I remain,

Sincerely yours,
The Schoolmaster

anonymous



—Photos courtesy of R. T. Smith

Menloe Castle

1.

With Strongbow the first mad
Blake came here, made River
Corrib his prize and bride, raised
limestone towers, apples, sloes
dark as a landlord's heart.
He wed local, coupled, taught
his get the noble gestures, swords
and wine, Connemara horses and
a legacy of force, the trimmed
rose. His tenants cut bog
cotton and netted red salmon,
stirred the porridge or starved
alone, rescued the Irish tongue
to curse Menloe's towers and Lady
Blake's womb. The manor lord's
hives gave forth sweet yield.
His coat-of-arms? A black cat
dancing, crowns on an azure field.

2.

The heirs raised ire from Galway
to Gort, taxed every loom
and churn, mocked the mass
and brought war home. Not even
famine could scotch the Black
Blakes' dancing, the candles,
laughter and the lash. The bees
swarmed and honey ran the color
of sunset, while applewood
shuttles under thatch sang
of sorrow. Ragged sheep tore
at the last grass, as the last
Lady Blake ruled a bare
parish. A crippled spinster,

she grew cruel and levied
a double turf tax. The great
hall fell to ruin, and when
the fire raged, made a hearth
of every room, even the loyal
nurse leapt to risk her fortune
in icy air while the villagers
lined River Corrib's shore
to watch tyranny's icon burn.

3.

Now what could this charred
comb of a castle mean on cool
afternoons when ravens circle or
roost on smoke-branded sills?
The lightstruck trees bear up
an autumn sky gone gray as damp
wool. The backlit crag of one
tower, birdcaw, the current's
lament against the shore. Stray
sheep among the roses graze,
as the undersong of windsheer
courses through the stones,
shapes the landscape of every
ruined dynasty: spent light,
spoiled honey, the barren
parody of a stately tomb.

R.T. Smith

The Guitarist Tunes Out

Upon her wiry shapeliness fingering—
Pushing and pulling; when strapped
Above her, she sometimes breaks
into soft screaming...

Oh yes! he does inquire with delight,
But cannot feel—trapped
Within these callous walls: (scar
tissue, if you please)...

And yet, should he ever let them fall,
She would inevitably leave him raw,
Bleeding, alone with the crusted stains
of his mastery.

S.D. Johnston

The Buzzard Tree

At least twenty-seven wretched birds I counted that day,
Heads hung low, searching eyes, feathers black like coal.
Thunderous, booming clouds swept in like an angry armada
Behind them; all the while there was no wind to quiet the silence.
The cracked ground begged for the fleet to pour down
Upon it; and here and there a grass clump withered from the sun.
The air grew heavy with the torrid smell of electric humidity,
As finally a slight breeze stretched its aging wings and flew.
The first drop broke the silence with a force so small my ears cracked.
Then the second, and another; until the ground became dark
With rain; I heard it groan, the land, with fury it moved.
In the atmosphere the dryness fled, chased by wetness
And long shadows; like a prism or a web the branches reached.
No buds or leaves, the only sign of life was twenty-seven shadows.
Ruffling feathers, or clawing bark, or snapping beak, but no call.
And one by one, the birds lifted and sailed,
Ahead of the armada, ahead of the searching winds.
Leaving only the lifeless, grasping, yearning tree.
Until finally all of those sanguine birds were but black specks
Against the dimming sky; and the lifeless water dripped
From the lifeless tree; the buzzard tree.

Simmons Buntin

Ambiguity in Arguing Abortion Rights

by Cassie Courville

Rights, choices, morals. Terms that go hand in hand when discussing abortion. Activists against abortion, calling themselves "pro-lifers," see the issue in stark black and white: they are right and "pro-choicers" are wrong. But society is trapped between these conflicting views. One of the reasons for the indecisiveness of our nation is the ambiguous terms used by each movement to support its own side.

The title "pro-life" stands for the activists on one side of the abortion issue. But, as one would deduce from a linguistic standpoint, the activists on the opposing side do not call themselves nor do they claim to be "anti-life." Instead, as the title indicates, those for choice are mainly concerned with a woman's right to make the choice of whether to give birth.

Both pro-lifers and pro-choicers include in their crowds people who are only partially pro-life or pro-choice. For example, those who claim to be pro-life but make exceptions in the cases of rape or incest victims are not totally "pro-life," as their title indicates. On the pro-choice side, there are some people who are only pro-choice

The term "pro-life" sounds wholesome, and many women, especially younger, naive women, feel guilty if they are not pro-life. But at the same time they are scared of the label "pro-choice" because they do not want to be perceived to be pro-abortion. Linguistically, the use of the prefix "pro-" is misleading in itself. It denotes a supportive position, but the suffix also connotes the absence of a middle area. For instance, pro-lifers disagree with pro-choicers who are against abortion but for each woman's right to choose. For the pro-lifers, it is not a personal decision or an issue of "rights."

Both sides' arguments speak to society as a whole. A "free society" should not invade the right to privacy of a woman's body, they say. Their interpretation of a "free society" is one which would not try to control women by the obligation or will of another dictated by law. This, in pro-choicers' eyes, would be a crime. But pro-lifers interpret the term differently. A "free society," in their opinion, would not allow a murder to take place unpunished. America does not believe in letting "criminals" roam freely. Killing an

rather than to constitutional questions such as rallying, marshalling polls, and taking to the streets. But when listening to the moralistic terms employed by pro-lifers, one would not expect them to react as they often do in such instances. Their language is often subtle with strong undertones. Rarely do they throw in radical terms. The "sanctity" and "dignity" of human life are emphasized by anti-abortionists. The holiness and worthiness of life is agreed upon by both sides but for pro-lifers the human life in question is most often the unborn baby's. The baby has a "right to life," they contend. For most pro-choice believers, the unborn is regarded as merely a fetus, not a human whose life started at conception. Therefore the "sacred" and "honored" human life is the mother's. "Protecting the life and health of a woman seeking an abortion is the most important issue," states the editor of *The Record* newspaper in Hackensack, New Jersey (April 9, 1989).

Another contention and strong argument among the activists is the issue of a "merciful society." Pro-choicers feel that a "merciful society" should not pass laws which allow unhealthy and handicapped children to be born. In pro-choicers' eyes, society's compassion should save the unborn from a fate of possibly considerable severity. The same society exercising its "mercy" will not deny the unborn baby its rights. Pro-lifers speak for the baby and this spokespersonship is their benevolence. The baby has every right to live, they believe, handicapped or not.

The indefinite phraseology in arguing abortion rights ironically lets many Americans create a grey area. As reported by the *St. Petersburg Times* (April 4, 1989), 62% of the people canvassed believe that abortion is wrong. Obviously all these people are not willing to side with pro-lifers in a fight against abortion because 74% believe abortion is a choice the mother has to make. Once again it is proven that the superficial terms "pro-life" and "pro-choice" are not true to the suggested meanings.

Another contention and strong argument among the activists is the issue of a "merciful society."

because of their sympathy for incest and rape victims. But these activists are not truly "pro-choice." One concludes that the titles "pro-life" and "pro-choice" therefore are misleading within themselves. Neither title is well-defined by the people who constitute the opposing sides.

It must also be taken into account that there are a few people who are totally pro-life or totally pro-choice in the general public. Most who are against abortion have "chosen" to be pro-life. And those who are pro-choice are equally as concerned with the "right to life" so adamantly emphasized by pro-lifers.

Some people who are anti-abortion have "chosen" to be pro-choice in order to emphasize the importance of the right to choice in America.

unborn baby is a "crime" against God and against a woman's own body to most pro-lifers.

The rest of society, those undecided on the abortion issue, must define for themselves what "free society" and what "crime" truly is. Because of the ambiguity cited in the argument, many people settle for the idea of freedom as presented by Robert Fulghum in his book *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, "Liberation is everybody getting what they want without knowing the whole truth. Or, in other words, liberation finally amounts to being free from things we don't like in order to be enslaved by things we approve of."

Activists on both sides of the abortion issue use tactics which are commonly applied to political



Life in Venice

by Jerome Saintjones

He had always heard about those poor souls who found themselves in positions, it seemed, that even God was too cowardly to intervene and handle Himself. There were those times when people had to face the carnal reality of their most difficult problems without help from above. And when those Jobs had braved the storm, they became strengthened in one sense, yet silently and decidedly less independent on the One who 'allowed' the test, he told the blonde reporter.

His difficulty, most incomparable in nature, once lay on a bed beside Trent Fitzgerald, partially disrobed, sweaty, sickly, and determined. She fanned herself with a few sheets of yellowed stationery and gazed at her lover-to-be through what she hoped were wanton eyes, yet through what she knew had to reveal some trace of the blues inside her forty-year-old frame, inside this shanty among the marshland.

The room, though peaceful was far removed from the loud nature of this wild delta deep in bayou Louisiana, just miles away from Venice, was filthy, almost too unclean to exist only an hour or so from the Cajun capital. Classical music from a once-abused radio found a corner of the room and was content to linger there.

"Hasn't this become a part of our brief relationship together?" asked Mrs. Brittany.

"I never knew what to expect," he replied, trying to pull the music out of the corner it claimed. "From the time we first met in New Orleans, I have tried not to expect anything at all."

Mrs. Brittany slowly, painfully raised herself from the bed to fully remove her robe. "You are getting much too old to take life so lightly. It will pass you by. And you, too, will wonder why the young have lost their interest in you."

"But you're not well. You seem—"

"You seem like a young man who died a long time ago. Perhaps you would have made someone a good doctor," the divorcee hissed, her eyes piercing the fidgeting nude body of the twenty-five-year-old sitting at the bed's edge. "Half the world is built on 'what seems.' The other half is built on 'what if.'"

She then took his hand and pulled him forward for a kiss, not unlike the time she had in the courtyard of Pat O'Brien's up in New Orleans. Only there they had sipped on Hurricanes and listened to the jazz which slithered around the tables, where visitors all pretended they had been to the tavern before.

Before Mrs. Brittany, Trent had found contentment in painting portraits of visitors in Jackson Square. On a good day, he'd celebrate by dining at Dooky Chase or Upstart Crow. And that was enough, albeit a slow painless death. Until Mrs. Brittany, that is.

When she had sat before him for her portrait, he thought: Here is a woman too beautiful to be left alone in New Orleans.

"Where are you from?" he asked as his pastels delicately teased the surface.

"Boston."

Classical music from a once-abused radio found a corner of the room and was content to linger there.

"You and your husband decided on a New Orleans spring, huh?" he probed.

"No," she replied, looking directly into his eyes. "The decision was all mine." The abrupt finality of her response offered on invitation to silence between the two of them. Only twenty feet away, visitors were dropping dollar bills in the hat of a teenage breakdancer who performed a routine they could have seen at home for free—had they been willing, of course,

to cross the railroad tracks.

New Orleans was an escapist's dream. And in this lazy fantasy town he had bedded many an alcoholic, frustrated, married octoon who had sought refuge from her own land of magnolias, hammocks and upper-middle class men, only to arrive in a world of her kind, prey to the younger, darker, earthier men she would have detested at home.

But, somehow, Mrs. Brittany was different. She possessed an air about her that held the young artist and lover to her side, where he seemed happy to remain, if only for the present. Early in the morning, they would leave their motel room in Harvey and cross the river into New Orleans.

It was in this blues and jazz Mecca that Trent supported himself solely by his skills as an artist. He was, in earnest, the child Billie Holiday used to sing about, the type of lover Esther Philips probably would have slept with. He had the wit and politeness mother's loved, although he had been practically motherless; he possessed the physique most men despised, even though he seldom exercised. But moreover, he was to canvas what John Donne was

to paper.

Mrs. Brittany at once saw these qualities in this handsome and talented young man who, she honestly felt, was throwing his life away. She had watched him create striking portraits of visitors who sat before him and had vowed to meet him and to know him...to be a part of him. Like magnets, their eyes kept meeting, pulling, as he recreated the well-dressed, buxom woman.

"I divorced my husband in Boston," she said, almost as if

someone had dropped a cue card she had been reading in the artist's eyes. Hours later, she was coaxing him into eating vichyssoise at a French restaurant.

After dinner, they walked on Canal Street and almost the whole of the French Quarter. They talked about life, but mostly death. She said her ideal idea of an exit from life would be to be left to float aimlessly. At a point when their conversation had given voice to their footsteps upon the cobblestone street, Mrs. Brittany asked: "Where do you live?"

"I have a room I rent from a little old lady on St. Charles," he replied. "It's not much, but it's nowhere from Vieux Carre."

"Is she a busybody?"

"No. At least, I don't think so."

"Then let's go there." When she noticed in him a look of hesitation, she replied, "Hell, she'll think I'm your mother."

*

They traveled the country together, each holding true to an unwritten, unspoken agreement.

But Mrs. Brittany was truly beautiful that night, an embodiment of passion he had never before experienced throughout all his exploits and education of the princesses. The humid night seemed to last forever as the two lovers shared and traded youth and passion for passion and wisdom, as the tiny dark room began to spin and spin. And then, when it seemed as if both could endure no further dizziness, they were both lifted from the humble floor mattress by Lady Day, like babes being tended by a nurse, wanting to be held.

What's the difference if I say
I'll go away
When I know I'll come back on
my knees someday?
For whatever my man is,
I'm his
forever more.

Then as they lay looking out of the lone window into the

night, Lady Day, as if she were singing especially to the two of them, started again.

Ooo, Ooo, Ooo
What a little moonlight can do
Ooo, Ooo, Ooo
What a little moonlight can
do for you

They traveled the country together, each holding true to an unwritten, unspoken agreement. He would never ask about the source of her seemingly endless supply of money, and she would never question his seemingly endless supply of time for her. When she began to get ill in San Francisco, it finally dawned on him that he knew little about this older woman in his life. What is her background? What are her likes and dislikes?

He had intended to find out more in San Francisco after he left, at her insistence, their room on Columbus Avenue. When he returned from his pilgrimage through Portsmouth Square

hours later, he found a note on the bed informing him that she had to go away for a few days. In the note, she pleaded with him to stay in San Francisco and told him where she had placed five hundred dollars for him. When he finally went to the desk clerk to pay the bill for their stay, the graying man told him Mrs. Brittany had paid in advance for two additional weeks of stay.

During those days, he must have searched every street in the Bay area and called every hospital. Finally, after he had been beaten by the cold winds which offered no clemency when assaulting the cable cars, he decided to return to Columbus Avenue to face his last night at the hotel. As he opened the door, Mrs. Brittany, looking swollen and puffy, smiled at him.

"Been looking for me?"

*

That next morning they packed all of their belongings

into the trunk of her Cadillac and headed back to New Orleans. He wondered if he would still have his room on St. Charles.

"Your mother paid for three months," said Mrs. Malveaux, beaming through brown, uneven teeth. He looked from her porch back to the car as Mrs. Brittany began to pull off.

"I'll come back later," she shouted.

When she returned for him that evening, she was a different person. Much of the gaiety was gone. For days she harped about his future, that he should do more, move to San Francisco or New York. She became less pleasurable to be around, even during their more private moments.

"You have a bright future ahead of you," she told him one day while they were driving down again to Venice. "But you must be willing to meet it halfway."

He had no idea what she meant and she would never explain.

"The world has no respect for a struggling artist," she would always respond. "It would just as soon accept a no-talent rich person over a talented poor one."

Their ride to the marshy land in which Venice was situated was mostly a silent one.

As Trent drove down the lonely highway, Mrs. Brittany looked out into the swamp land. "It's time," she almost whispered.

"What was that?"

"Oh," she responded as if stunned into the present. "I was thinking that it's time to tell you how much you have meant to me."

"You don't have to tell me. I sense it."

"It's good to say it, nonetheless."

"How do you feel?"

"A little tired."

"Why won't you tell me what's wrong? If you cared, you would at least try."

"Dammit, let's not go through it again! Please! I'm in no mood for compassion. I have enough to contend with now without



having to console a little boy!"

Trent pulled over to the side of the road. "So, is that all I have been to you? A boy, huh? I'm a man where it matters to you, but a boy when it comes to trying to understand you!"

"I didn't mean that."

"But you can't take it back."

"Please. Let's make this a special trip," she said.

"I'll never understand you, Crystal," he sighed, starting the car. "You seem to be a sick woman, yet you want to gallivant around the country like, like a, a—"

"Young college girl?"

"No, that's not what I meant."

"Isn't it? Never mind. This is a special trip, perhaps our last to Venice."

"Last? What do you mean?"

She didn't answer or say anything until they had reached Venice. There they met a mulatto named Jacques who drove them in an old Ford truck to the islands of the Delta.

"Is everything okay?" she asked Jacques, who nodded solemnly. Trent's imagination soared, but he said nothing.

"You'll need these," said Jacques, handing each of them a pair of knee-high rubber boots. He then drove back in the direction of Venice.

"Where'll we go now?"

"Ever handle an outboard motor?" She attempted a smile.

"Never."

"I have. Get in—careful now!"

The two of them swerved through the streams of the Mississippi Delta, watching the assorted wildlife either run or paddle to safety. She steered them past fishermen's huts, and only occasionally did they hear over the motor the sound of a faraway hunter.

Finally, Mrs. Brittany aimed toward a little shanty she seemed to recognize immediately. When they had walked inside the decaying structure, Trent noticed a usable fireplace and a bed in fairly good condition, considering whatever means must have taken to get it to the shack.

"Close the door," said a solemn Mrs. Brittany. "I need to

talk with you. I need to let you know the truth."

"You don't have to tell me...that you don't love me, I mean. I never expected love."

"No, Trent. That's not what I'm about to tell you." She took his hand and made him sit beside her on the bed. "The fact is that I do love you."

"Half the world is built on 'what seems.' The other half is built on 'what if.'"

"Is it about your sickness, then? Bad news?"

"To answer both questions: yes and no." Somehow she managed a sincere smile.

"Well," Trent started in a sigh of relief, "that's news enough for me."

"Why don't we first take our own commercial and then come back for the rest of the news?"

"I'm game if you are."

As he looked into her eyes, he once again saw the woman who had sat before him for a portrait months ago. Her skin was glistening from the penetrating delta sunset. Her wanton smile was an elixir which cured the disease of circumstance and allowed him to see two souls in need. In Mrs. Brittany was the warm essence of living; outside of her was the cold stench of minutes and hours he could not control. In Mrs. Brittany was the celebration of life and the futility of a thousand poems; outside of her was the mourning of the utility of facts, that perhaps he had given up on his dreams, that he no longer cared to be great, to be free to be the best artist in the world.

Mrs. Brittany was a New Orleans he could enter, only if it was only briefly, which could give him back the dreams denied him at St. Jackson Square. In Mrs. Brittany was the deepness of a passion which left him lightheaded, bewildered, relieved and yes, loved. And now everything and every moment outside of her was love in blank verse.

The woman beneath him now

was the voice of the canvas to a painter's brush, saying, "Let me bring out the best in you; please bring out the best in me!" She was the creator of pink and of roses and of song, the goddess of passion and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Her touch made him whole.

And, almost as if she had

found the cue card she had lost before, as she experienced his life—and remembered that all life flows—she whispered in his ear, "Let every heart that knoweth love say, 'Amen and amen.'"

*

And on the third day, Mrs. Brittany had appealed to her lover, who looked down at her through eyes of pity. For the first time, he broke down into tears.

"But you're not well," he repeated.

"Please, Trent, don't pull this little boy act with me," she pleaded, her own eyes watery, swollen.

"I am not pulling a little-boy act! You tell me that you are dying of adeno—"

"Adenocarcinoma."

"I don't give a damn about pronouncing it!" he shouted.

"You tell me you're dying of cancer of the pancreas, and I'm supposed to make love to you like nothing is new? I have a heart, you know."

"I know you do, sweetheart—"

"Why'd you do it? Tell me why you did it!" He tried to control his trembling voice, but could not.

"Why'd I do what?"

"You knew what the deal was...and...and you went on and let me fall in love with you. That was a cruel thing to do, Crystal. I'm not a little boy, and you know it. I'm a man who has a heart, who, who got cought with his guard down."

Wild birds echoed above the

shack where, inside, the first man in the history of its existence cried. The radio had been silenced since she first decided to tell him of her plight. The room harbored a killer silence that ripped from within until a deafening moan slashed the tranquility.

"Crystal? Are you all right?"

She wrapped her arms around as if she were giving herself a hug.

"Baby, please tell me that you're all right!" Trent begged.

"Hold me," she said, beginning to shake. "On God, I hurt so bad. Please, just hold me. Hold me."

*

"She was lonely, and I was, too," the internationally renowned artist told the young reporter. "Yet her love for life and for youth awarded her enough time to care."

"How long have you been working on this collection?" the blonde asked, pad in hand, tape recorder paused.

"I began what I call the Crystal Brittany collection the first year I stayed in Venice, Louisiana, following Mrs. Brittany's untimely death, seven years ago. She had provided me with the where-withal to succeed, so I decided to meet her halfway."

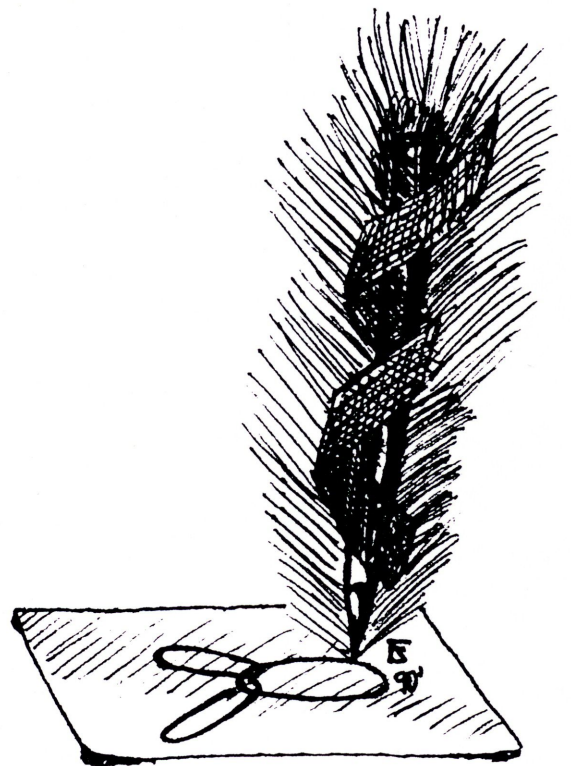
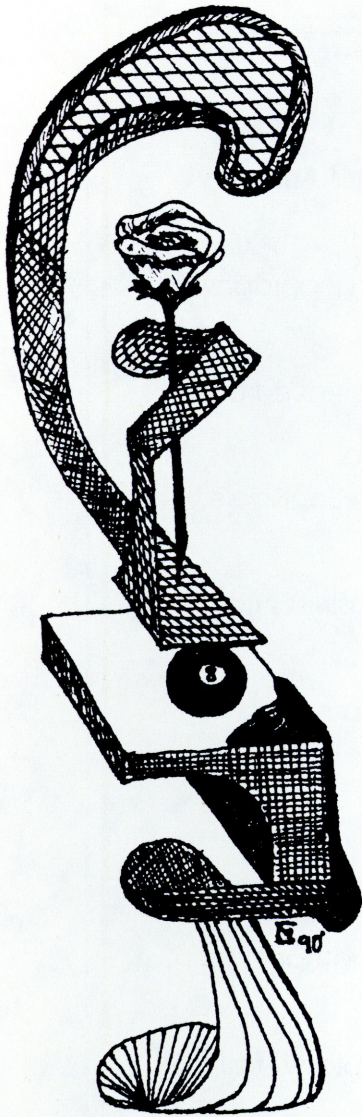
"Mr. Fitzgerald, of course, we all know that you don't need the money. What will you do with the proceeds from the sale of these paintings—cancer research?"

"No," he replied, reflecting a moment. "Life research."

"I think Crystal would want every cent pumped back into the youth of this world. She was all about living a life based on living. All of our other institutions are about dying—and profit off of it. I'd never give a dollar to an organization designed to keep people from dying. Life research. That's where the money is going. I'm gonna start research on how to develop minds attuned to living."

"About Mrs. Brittany's death in Venice—"

"No more. Let's talk about Mrs. Brittany's life in Venice."



Contributors

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